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A Strike in Santa Land

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By
EFFA E. PRESTON



PAINÉ PUBLISHING CO.
DAYTON, OHIO

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We've Just Arrived from Bashful Town.
We Hope You've Brought Your Smiles
Along.

Come and Partake of Our Welcome Cake.
We're Very Glad to See You Here.
With Quaking Hearts We Welcome You.

CLOSING SONGS

Mr. Sun and Mrs. Moon.
Now, Aren't You Glad You Came?
We Do Not Like to Say Goodbye.
We'll Now Have to Say Goodbye.

Paine Publishing Co., Dayton, Ohio

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CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

PS 635
W P 829

SANTA CLAUS—Regulation costume.

MRS. SANTA CLAUS—Girl in dark dress, white apron and cap, wears spectacles.

BROWNIE—Small boy in brown cambric suit cut like pajamas.

TIN SOLDIERS—Two small boys dressed in soldier suits, one dressed as private—boy scout suit—the other as a general. Sew gold lace, etc., on scout suit.

BOOKS—Five girls dressed in white, wearing from string about neck a huge black poster on which, in bright letters, is name of book represented.

JUMPING JACK—Boy in blue or red suit, long stick fastened to back, string hanging from it. He moves in a very jerky fashion.

TOP—Small boy or girl, plump, in bright-colored dress, with gay stripes running around it. Stripes made by sewing on strips of bright-colored cloth.

DOLL—Pretty little girl beautifully dressed. Moves in stiff fashion, talks mechanically.

FOUNTAIN PEN—Tall boy dressed in black cambric suit cut straight from neck to feet, gold band represented by strip of yellow cloth sewed around suit. A pen point cut from black or yellow cardboard is fastened at back of neck.

TREE—Boy or girl in green suit trimmed with branches of evergreen.

TIME OF PLAYING—About twenty minutes.

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A Strike in Santa Land

STAGE represents a room in SANTA's house. Packages well tied up are piled in the back of the stage. SANTA appears ready to start on his annual journey.

SANTA: My, I'm tired. I'm glad Christmas comes but once a year or I never could stand the excitement.

MRS. SANTA [*entering*]: SANTA, it's almost time to start.

SANTA: Are the reindeer ready and is everything packed?

MRS. SANTA: Yes, I think so.

SANTA: I've tried trains and autos and airships but none of them suit me like my faithful old reindeer. I don't have to steer them up the chimneys. They know just where to go.

BROWNIE [*entering*]: Well, SANTA, everything is ready for your trip but I have some unpleasant news for you.

SANTA: Unpleasant news—that's strange. Here in Santa-land we never hear unpleasant things for they never happen. What is it JACK-OF ALL-TRADES?

BROWNIE: Some of the very nicest toys we have made this whole year refuse to be packed. They say they will not leave Santa-land and go to earth.

SANTA: Well! Well! Well! What do you think of that, Mother?

MRS. SANTA: SANTA, be firm. You're entirely too easy with them. They'll all be wanting to stay next year if you don't make these toys go.

SANTA: Of course, there are toys enough without these.

BROWNIE: You always find some extra children you didn't know about.

MRS. SANTA: Certainly you do, BROWNIE, send the naughty toys in one at a time and we will hear what they have to say. Now, SANTA, be firm. You are so kind hearted if a doll cries you'll let her have her way.

SANTA: Now, MOTHER, you're as bad as I am.

BROWNIE *goes out and two tin soldiers enter, walking stiffly and moving exactly together. They salute as they come to standstill.*

SANTA: What's this I hear? Why aren't you packed?

FIRST SOLDIER: I don't want to be given to any child. Suppose I should not be properly treated. A careless boy might not treat me according to my rank. I am a general—suppose a private soldier was placed in front of me. Suppose he was given the best place in our box. I never could stand that. What a fate for a General.

SECOND SOLDIER: SANTA CLAUS, I am a private soldier and I am proud of it. The Brownie who made me did a fine job. Just see how well my uniform fits. I'm just as proud as the General. I will not associate with soldiers I have to salute all the time and wait on. If I got put in the box with a General I wouldn't like it any more than he would. Children are very careless. Something unpleasant might easily happen. I think it best for me to stay right here. The Brownies can use me as a pattern next Christmas.

SANTA: This is very strange. I never dreamed that you toys didn't get on perfectly well. After this I'll put all the officers in one box and all the common soldiers in another.

BROWNIE *brings in five girls who represent books. They sing—*

Song—Air: MY BONNIE

FIRST BOOK:

WE'RE BOOKS filled with stories and pictures.

We want to stay spotless and clean.

And not become dog eared and dirty

Like most story books you have seen.

Chorus:

We want to stay

Right here in Santa Claus Land, we do.

We want to stay

Right here in Santa Claus Land.

SECOND BOOK:

WE'LL not be marked up by bad children—

Our pages all mislaid and worn.

All sticky with jelly and candy,

Our beautiful pictures all torn.

FIRST BOOK: I'm Anderson's Fairy Tales. I have the loveliest stories in me—all the Ugly Duckling and the Shoes that Danced, and the poor little Match Girl.

SECOND BOOK: I'm the Just-So Stories. Oh, how funny I am. I tell about how the Elephant got his trunk, how the Camel got his hump, and about man's first friend, the dog.

THIRD BOOK: I am Alice in Wonderland. You'll just love Alice. Everybody does. The White Rabbit is the sweetest thing.

FOURTH BOOK: I tell about Robinson Crusoe. I'm awfully exciting. A boy would like me for Christmas but he won't get me.

FIFTH BOOK: I'm Little Women—with a lovely binding and lots of pictures. The little girls' grandmothers read and liked me for I am a book that never gets old. I have earned a vacation so I shall stay home this Christmas.

SANTA: Dear me, This is very annoying.

MRS. SANTA: Be firm. Be firm.

BROWNIE *brings in a JUMPING JACK.*

JUMPING-JACK: SANTA, I'm sorry to seem fussy but I really can't go out this year. How would you like to be capering like this [*jerks about*] every time someone pulled a string. Folks think a JUMPING-JACK's arms and legs never get tired but I want to tell you they do.

SANTA and MRS. SANTA [*together*]: Poor thing.

BROWNIE *brings in TOP.*

TOP [*spinning round and round*]: SANTA, I'm so dizzy my head will fly off. After I was made all the Brownies in the workshop kept spinning me just because I have such a sweet hum. If I have to be put on a Christmas tree and be played with all day tomorrow I shall spin myself to death. I expect to stay right here, SANTA.

MRS. SANTA: But it isn't hard work to spin.

TOP: You just try it for a day, dear MRS. SANTA

BROWNIE *brings in beautiful doll.*

DOLL: I suppose you're cross, SANTA, but I can't help it. I have heard the most terrible stories about the way dolls are treated by careless little girls. They have their lovely curls torn off and their eyes are poked in by little girl's fingers. They are left outdoors in the sun and rain and that spoils the complexion. It took two days to make my complexion and I will not have it spoiled. Think of having this lovely dress made dirty by sticky fingers. You and MRS. SANTA will be lonesome. You really need me any way. I have named myself since I do not intend that any child shall have a chance to name me.

BROWNIE: What is your name?

DOLL: It is beautiful. GWENDOLYN GERALDINE GENEVIEVE ARABELLA. Isn't that a delightful name?

BROWNIE: I shall call you JERRY for short. I can't remember all that list.

DOLL: JACK-OF ALL TRADES, you'll address me by my proper name or not at all.

SANTA: Don't quarrel. He won't call you anything for you won't be here. [DOLL *cries*.]

BROWNIE *brings in* FOUNTAIN PEN.

PEN: SANTA, I'm entirely too smart to give away. I can write wonderful things.

SANTA: What have you written?

PEN: I'll say my last poem for you. I just wrote it on my box lid. It is what a little boy said at a Christmas entertainment and it's about you.

MRS. SANTA: Say it for us, PEN.

PEN [*Recites*]:

LAST Christmas eve, at twelve o'clock—
I know 'twas very shocking—
I tried to see dear SANTA CLAUS,
The while he filled my stocking.

I hid within the chimney nook
And chuckled with elation
To think how SANTA'D be surprised
And filled with consternation.

But, later, SANTA was amused,
'Twas he who did the peeping.
I never saw how SANTA looked,
Alas, he found me sleeping.

SANTA: Ha! Ha! They never catch old SANTA napping. Every year some child tries to see me fill his stocking but it's no use. It can't be done.

PEN: You can see for yourself, SANTA, that you need some one like me with you all the time. If I can write verses like that think how beautifully I could answer the millions of letters you get every year from the children all over the world. You need me SANTA. Don't think of sending me away.

SANTA: Well, PEN I've answered letters without you for a great many years, but perhaps you are right.

MRS. SANTA: SANTA, be firm, be firm.

BROWNIE *brings in CHRISTMAS TREE, crying.*

TREE: I won't be trimmed. I won't be trimmed. I don't want things hung on me. I hate candles. I don't want tinsel strung over my branches. Those silly toys will be stuck all over me. I won't be a CHRISTMAS TREE, so there.

ALL THE TOYS: We're not going away. Don't worry. We don't expect to be hung on any tree.

SANTA: You poor little tree--stop crying. You and the TOYS may stay with me till next year.

TREE and TOYS: Oh, thank you, SANTA. You are a dear.

MRS. SANTA: There, I knew he wouldn't be firm. He spoils them all.

TREE and TOYS *retire to rear of stage and appear to talk together.*

Enter BROWNIE.

BROWNIE: Oh, SANTA, I have just received a terrible message on the wireless from a little settlement in Alaska.

SANTA: What is it? What is it?

BROWNIE: The message was sent by your helper, FLEET-FOOT. He learned just an hour ago that there is a family living in the little settlement that was not counted when he made his census. There are two children—a boy and a girl, both very small.

MRS. SANTA: Poor little things, and no presents left for them.

SANTA: No, I must start in five minutes. There's no time to make anything for them now.

BROWNIE: There's nothing left in the workshop. I just looked. It's a shame. FLEET-FOOT says they are such nice children.

During all this conversation the TREE and the Toys have been listening very carefully. They come forward.

TREE: How many children, did you say?

BROWNIE: Two—very nice ones.

SOLDIERS [together]: Do you think they could tell a General from a private?

DOLL: Does the little girl have clean hands?

PEN: I suppose the parents might appreciate my poetry.

TOP: Nights are long in Alaska. They would spin me only in the daytime I suppose.

JUMPING-JACK: One reason why I wanted to stay here was because of the climate. It's cold in Alaska, too, isn't it SANTA?

SANTA: Yes, my child, yes.

BOOKS [together]: You think we ought to go, don't you, SANTA?

SANTA: My dear Toys, I leave it to your consciences. Do you like to think of those two little children way up in Alaska doing without any Christmas gifts because you were selfish?

TOYS and TREE [*together*]: Oh, SANTA, you always get us to do just what you want us to anyway.

TREE: Come on, folks, we might as well go in and be packed. There's nothing else to do.

TOYS: Yes, come on.

MRS. SANTA: I'm so glad SANTA was firm.

SANTA: Before we go let's sing one song together—a good old Christmas song.

TREE and TOYS: All right.

ALL sing—

Air: SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP

1—BLOW, cold winds, blow

Across the drifting snow.

The Christmas bells chime sweet and clear

Like fairy music to the ear,

Blow, cold winds, blow.

2—Sing, gayly sing

Make all the echoes ring.

Since Christmas comes but once a year

We'll celebrate with right good cheer,

Sing, gayly sing.

3—Glow, hearth fires, glow.

The Christmas lights are low.

The Yule log's almost burned away—

At dawn the ashes will be gray.

Glow, hearthfires, glow.

CURTAIN



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